For immediate release
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PAG/RTA leadership name interim director

The Pima Association of Governments Regional Council and Regional Transportation Authority Board named Cherie Campbell, PAG’s current Director of Planning, as the Interim Executive Director, effective immediately, at today’s meeting and approved a separation package with PAG/RTA Executive Director Gary Hayes.

Campbell, whose career at PAG has spanned 20 years, has been responsible for a broad range of management and implementation activities at PAG, which is the federally designated metropolitan planning organization and council of governments for the region. She has supervised major regional programs in areas that include the environment, transportation, social services, rideshare and data development.

Previously, she had served as PAG’s Transportation Planning Director and was actively engaged in development of the $2.1 billion, multi-modal Regional Transportation Authority plan approved by Pima County voters in May 2006.

“Cherie has the depth of knowledge and experience with PAG and the RTA to serve in the interim capacity as we begin our search for a permanent executive director,” said PAG Chair and South Tucson Mayor Jennifer Eckstrom. “On behalf of the Regional Council and RTA Board, we also would like to express our appreciation to PAG staff for their efforts during the past six months.”

Hayes, who joined the organizations in January 2004, has been out of office full-time since April due to health reasons and has conducted work duties from home, will conclude his service at the end of the month.

Hayes joined Pima Association of Governments as interest in forming the Regional Transportation Authority was rapidly advancing. Prior to joining PAG, Hayes had served as executive director of the Central New York Regional Planning and Development Board in Syracuse, N.Y., since 1976.

Hayes quickly teamed with local leadership, transportation officials, consultants, and key PAG staff to accelerate planning and outreach to develop a 20-year plan that involved broad-based citizen input. The $2.1 billion, multi-modal plan was approved by voters in May 2006 by a 3-2 margin.

“Clearly, a valuable component of the success of the plan was its regional and citizen-driven approach,” said RTA Chair and Oro Valley Mayor Satish Hiremath. “The RTA model continues to be
Gary gathered the right people and resources to get the job done and to ensure ongoing accountability to the voters who approved the plan.”

Recognizing the need to get RTA projects rolling soon after the election, Hayes saw the opportunity to quickly address transit service needs with initial cash flow from the half-cent sales tax revenue. The first transit service improvements were introduced in August 2006 to help reduce overcrowding and customer wait times.

“Expanded evening and weekend transit service also made transit more accessible to people who worked second shifts,” Eckstrom said. “This was an important need in our community where this service was added in the earlier years of the RTA.”

Since 2006, the RTA has completed more than 490 projects, including 11 major roadway projects throughout the region, 78 transit service improvements, more than 60 bus pullouts and numerous bicycle and pedestrian improvements. The Tucson modern streetcar project, which is co-managed by the City of Tucson and the RTA, started rail construction this year and the work is 50 percent completed.

In 2007, Hayes received the Arizona Capitol Times Leader of the Year in public policy award for his efforts in transportation, particularly helping to establish the Regional Transportation Authority.

In January 2009, the RTA unveiled a new rebranding for local transit services, including Sun Tran, Sun Express, Sun Shuttle and Sun Rideshare. “Gary was instrumental in encouraging that RTA-funded regional transit services have a seamless look and feel, along with common transfer policies, a unified fare structure and single point of contact for customer service,” said Jim DeGrood, PAG’s Transportation Services Director. “We are all now very familiar with the more cohesive look of the blue and silver transit vehicles operating across the region and soon to be part of the Tucson modern streetcar, Sun Link.”

In 2009, Hayes received the 2009 Arizona Transit Association Friends in Transit Excellence Award for his efforts on the seamless regional branding.

Under Hayes’ leadership, PAG became a leader in environmental stewardship, with nationally recognized efforts in alternative fuel use and the establishment of the nation’s first solar standards board for the burgeoning solar industry. Hayes also expanded PAG’s recognition in the community with support of a rebranding of PAG, including a new logo and look and feel that aligned more with metropolitan planning agencies nationwide. PAG and the RTA will gain more exposure when it moves to its new location at 1 East Broadway later next year along the Tucson modern streetcar line, a relocation that Hayes had considered for some time.

“Gary raised the bar for Pima Association of Governments and elevated PAG’s presence in the community along with the higher-profile RTA activity,” Eckstrom said. “RTA Chair Hiremath and I would like to thank Gary on behalf of our governing bodies for his service to both organizations and his accomplishments over the past nine years. We wish him well on his road to better health.”

Hiremath added, “Gary has been an invaluable part of the Tucson metro region. Under his leadership, local jurisdictions were able to come together for the greater good, working toward common goals. His contributions laid the groundwork for regional collaboration. While his departure is certainly a loss, Gary’s legacy will continue to serve as a solid foundation for our entire region.”
provide accurate information, and coordinate an open and cooperative planning process to promote good decision-making for the region. Please visit www.PAGregion.com for more information or www.facebook.com/PAGregion.

The Regional Transportation Authority is the fiscal manager of the $2.1 billion regional transportation plan approved by Pima County voters on May 16, 2006. The RTA Board is comprised of elected representatives from the cities of Tucson and South Tucson, Pima County, the towns of Marana, Oro Valley and Sahuarita, the Pascua Yaqui Tribe and the Tohono O’odham Nation. A representative of the Arizona State Transportation Board also serves on the board. For more information about the RTA plan, visit www.RTAmobility.com or call (520) 770-9410.